DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 739 EA 025 192

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TITLE School Choice: What Guides an Adolescent's Decision?
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Decision Making; High Schools; *High School Students; Parent School Relationship; *Public Schools; *School Choice; School Community Relationship; School Policy; *Student Attitudes; Student School Relationship

ABSTRACT

Choice in education gained popularity as a means by which families can become involved in the education of their children. This case study addresses how the interests, needs, and objectives of secondary school students, and their parents as reported by the students, resulted in the choice between two high schools in a suburban district with a policy of school choice. Archival records, documents, personal semistructured interviews, and a general student survey questionnaire (yielding 1,555 secondary school student responses, or a district average of 85.5 percent) is used to investigate students' perceptions, experiences, and reasoning related to choosing a school. Four research questions guided the study. They concerned: factors contributing to students' decisions to choose one school over another; the process of choice; whether choice influences the racial and religious identity of the school community; and the perceived outcomes for the individual students as a consequence of choice. Descriptive statistics are reported. A finding is that students and their families seldom collected systematic information before making a choice decision, instead learning about the schools by word of mouth. The critical determinant of school choice is the student-environment fit, the perception by the student that the school ethos is right for the kind of person that individual perceives him- or herself to be. Both race and religion seemed to have played a modest role in the students' definition of student-environment fit. More than three-fourths of those students who chose their school attendance felt they had made the right choice. (Contains 25 references.) (RR)

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SCHOOL CHOICE:

WHAT GUIDES AN ADOLESCENT'S DECISION?

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Paper presented at the annual meeting
of the American Educational Research Association
Atlanta, April 1993

EA 025 192

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Abstract

This case study addressed how the interests, needs, and objectives of secondary school students, and their parents as reported by the students, resulted in the choice between two high schools in a suburban district with a policy of school choice. Multiple sources of information, including archival records, documents, personal semi-structured interviews, and a general student survey questionnaire were used to investigate students' perceptions, experiences, and reasoning related to choosing a school. The questions of whether students knowingly chose one high school over another, how and why they did so, and the outcomes resulting from such choice were explored.

Analysis revealed that students and their families seldom collected systematic information before making a decision, instead learning about the schools through word of mouth. Though family discussion concerning choice was meager, students were aware of parental values and objectives. Students' awareness of their right to choose a school did not necessarily mean attendance at their school of choice; they mentioned such constraints as transportation and parental preferences. Students who had chosen their high school of attendance reported that their choice of school was based on such factors as friends, the kinds of students and people and the nature of their interactions, a desire for academic excellence, classes and extracurricular activities, teachers and their teaching methodologies, the school's environment, and the school's reputation and location. The critical determinant of school choice, however, was the student-environment fit, the perception by the student that the school ethos was right for the kind of person they perceived themselves to be. Both race and religion seemed to have played a modest role in the students' definition of student-environment fit.

More than three fourths of those students who chose their school of attendance felt that they had made the right choice. Significant differences concerning social and academic comfort levels and happiness and sense of well-being were found among students who claimed attendance at their school of choice in contrast to those who did not.

Introduction

Choice in education has gained unprecedented popularity as a means by which families can become involved in the education of their children. The idea of choice is not new, as evidenced by such widespread and "unplanned strategies" as a family move or the selection of a private school education (Coons, 1990; Witte, 1990). The recent interest in choice, however, is due in part to the nonresponsiveness of public schools to concerns of students and parents, to poor academic performance, and to the need for effective desegregation strategies, but also in part to the widely held view in America that choice is something that is good in itself, a basic democratic right and fundamental to American values and way of life (ASCD, 1990; Levin, 1990).[1]

Support for school choice comes from parents, the general public, the business community, and politicians. The results of a 1987 Gallup Poll indicate that 76% of the parents of public school students want to exercise choice by choosing the schools their children attend (Bennett, 1990). In response to such overwhelming constituency support of the school choice concept, governors and legislatures in dozens of states have enacted various programs of choice. At the federal level, President Bush called the expansion of school choice a "national imperative" and made it the centerpiece of his *America 2000* initiative. President Clinton, although differing in his approach to the implementation of a school choice program, likewise advocates choice. With its growing popularity and the current national focus to restructure schools, school choice will undoubtedly continue to attract a lot of attention in the years to come; a variety of choice programs will be implemented in increasing numbers around the nation in suburban as well as urban, and within and between school districts. Raywid (1992) surmises that:

> Even without the substantial support emanating from the White House, it is doubtful that the idea will die. Support sources are too broad and substantial, and even if they should dwindle, it could prove politically difficult to remove such a widely discussed prerogative after it has been claimed and exercised. (p. 116)

Based in theory on the idea that the choices of individuals in a free, competitive market determine the supply and demand of goods and services, school choice enables consumers--students and their families, to choose the school that they perceive would best fit the student's needs. As such, the schools no longer assume the role of provider wherein administrative convenience or special interests represented in the administrative organization allocate the number of students and determine which schools students will attend. Instead, the schools are placed in the position of earning their student enrollment in the open market through the quality of education delivered and the options and diversity in schooling arrangements (Coleman, 1990).[2]

Thus, the free market orientation to school choice requires that schools attract their consumers with variety and excellence. As education consumers desirous of positive outcomes, students and their families have the right to assess the quality of educational offerings and reject the lack of excellence. They have the

right to determine the qualities and choose the school that they perceive would maximize the student-environment fit to enable academic success and excellence. Such an assessment or determination of school of choice involves student and parent decision making, the process and outcomes of which this study investigated.

In particular, this study addressed how the interests, needs, and objectives of secondary school students, and also parents, as reported by the students, interacted with a suburban school district's administrative actions around school choice. The focus of the study was on high school students and their personal perceptions, experiences, and reasoning related to decision making and choosing a school. The purpose of the study was to determine: a) student awareness of the district's policy of school choice and subsequent action or non-action, including how and why students knowingly choose one high school over another; and, b) the outcomes resulting from the operation of school choice, both for the individual student and the individual school communities.

Four basic research questions guided the study:

1. What factors contribute to students' decisions to choose one school over another?
2. How is the process of choice enacted by students and their families?
3. Does the operation of school choice significantly influence the racial and religious identity of the individual school communities?
4. What are the perceived outcomes for the individual students as a consequence of school choice?

Methodology

To determine general student awareness and subsequent action or non-action regarding the district's choice policy, and the outcomes resulting from the operation of choice for both the individual student and school communities, the researcher surveyed the high school students in the district. To guide the construction of the survey questionnaire, the researcher reflected upon the findings from analysis of interview data and worked with the administration of the district to obtain their input. Thus, the basic plan was to:

1. Conduct an archival and document search to identify students who had knowingly chosen to attend the high school outside their catchment area.
2. Interview students identified through the archival search using a semi-structured protocol.
3. Analyze the interview data.
4. Construct a survey instrument to be used with the general student population in the district's two high schools.
5. Survey the district's high school students, grades 9-12.
6. Analyze the survey data and draw conclusions.

Interviews

Interview data was collected during interviews with 9th-12th grade students who, at some time since the district's choice policy was implemented in the 1988-89 school year, had knowingly exercised the school district's policy. They had experienced making a choice of schools by having chosen to attend the comprehensive high school outside their catchment area rather than the comprehensive high school within their catchment area. Access to the district's files for a document and archival search facilitated identification of the interviewees. Letters were sent to the parents of these students to ask if they would be willing to grant permission for their child(ren) to be interviewed. To guide construction of the interview protocol, the researcher reflected upon the pertinent literature concerning adolescents, effective schools and their ethos, and school choice. Information obtained from the interviews was organized into matrices and summary tabulations were created.

Development of the Survey Questionnaire

Reflection upon the findings from analysis of the interview data coupled with input from the district's administration guided the construction of the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to discover:

1. General student awareness of the district's policy on school choice;
2. How and why the district's secondary school students choose one high school over another; and,
3. The outcomes resulting from the operation of choice for both the individual student and school communities.

The focus was on secondary school students' perceptions, experiences, and reasoning. Thus, a survey questionnaire with only a checklist approach was not adequate. Taking care to simplify the method of securing information from the students and yet provide opportunities for students to elaborate upon specific responses, and to explain their choices, perceptions, and reasoning, a four-page survey questionnaire was designed that included both closed and open-ended questions and eight questions with numerical response scales.

Among the eight questions with numerical response scales were five with seven-point scales (0=none at all; 6=great extent/emphasis, according to the wording of the question), and three questions with six-point scales (1=extremely uncomfortable/unhappy; 6=extremely comfortable/happy, according to the wording of the question). These questions provided students with the opportunity to indicate on a number scale the emphasis that was given to various factors during the decision process, the extent of influence particular individuals had in the decision process, and their comfort levels and sense of well-being and happiness concerning their school placements. The intent of the questions was to provide a quantification of information and provide an alternative means for the collection of data.

Pilot Test

A pilot test of the survey instrument was conducted using a group of 22 students from the two high schools. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the students who participated in the pilot study were debriefed. Minor modifications were made based on their verbal feedback and on their written responses to items on the questionnaire. The final survey instrument was printed and readied for distribution to the respective high schools.

Survey Procedure

With the cooperation of building principals, assistant principals, and teachers, the survey was conducted in both high schools. To keep disruption of the school program to a minimum, the survey was conducted among all students who were present (except the specially bussed population of hearing impaired students at one of the schools) at the same time of day--during each school's homeroom period. Absentees were not given an opportunity to respond to the survey at a later date.

The survey questionnaires were distributed in packets with specific instructions for administration. The instructions included general background information for the teacher on school choice and the district's choice policy, and a script for the teacher to read to introduce the survey to the students and provide instructions for completion of the questionnaire. At the end of the homeroom period, the questionnaires were collected and taken to the principal's office.

Analysis of the Survey Data

Information from the survey questionnaires was numerically coded and entered into electronic spreadsheets--one spreadsheet per school. To create summary tabulations of questionnaire items, the appropriate spreadsheet column(s) were exported into the StatView statistical software package. Percentages were calculated to provide measures of frequency and importance. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each questionnaire item that used a six- or seven-point numerical response scale. To assess statistical significance of the obtained results, the chi-square test was used for categorical variables and the independent *t*-test for continuous measures.

Results of the Survey Questionnaire

A total of 1555 secondary school students, or a district average of 85.5%, responded to the general student survey questionnaire: 781 from Mayfield High School[3] (87.3% of the student body), and 774 from Oak Hill High School (83.6% of the student body). General representation by grade level included: 26.5% in 9th, 25% in 10th, 24.5% in 11th, and 24.5% in 12th. Slightly more males (52%) than females (48%) responded. The results of the survey questionnaire are presented below within a framework provided by the four research questions that guided the study.

What factors contributed to students' decisions to choose one school over another?

1) Awareness about the district's choice policy:

An average of 64% of all survey respondents indicated that they were aware of the district's policy on school choice. More respondents at Mayfield (67%) indicated awareness than those at Oak Hill (62%). A significant difference by gender was found among all survey respondents: 70% of the girls indicated awareness compared to 61% of the boys. Analysis by grade level among all respondents revealed that 11th and 12th grade students (69% and 68%) were more aware of the district's policy on school choice than students in 9th or 10th grade, but the 9th graders (64%) were more aware of the policy than the 10th graders (61%). The primary method by which over 43% of the respondents became aware that the policy existed was through the proverbial grapevine--conversations with friends or other students who had exercised their right to choice through transfer or knew of someone who had transferred. Only about 6% of the respondents reported having heard about the policy from teachers, counselors, or the schools while about 4% reported having learned about the policy from their parents or another family member.

2) Ability or desire to act:

When students were specifically asked if they were currently attending the high school of their choice in the district, a significant difference was found: over 79% of Oak Hill respondents said, "Yes," compared to about 60% of Mayfield respondents who indicated likewise (YES respondents). Approximately 38% of Mayfield respondents and 20% of those from Oak Hill indicated that they were not attending the district high school of their choice (NO respondents).

When policy awareness and student action were simultaneously considered, analysis revealed that almost 42% of Mayfield respondents and 52% of Oak Hill's were both aware of the district's choice policy and attending their school of choice (Aware-YES respondents). In contrast, almost 25% of Mayfield's respondents and over 9% of Oak Hill's claimed awareness of the district policy but were not attending their school of choice (Aware-NO respondents). Furthermore, almost 18% of Mayfield respondents and 26% of Oak Hill's said that they were not aware of the policy but were attending their school of choice (Unaware-YES respondents); and almost 13% of Mayfield respondents and over 10% of Oak Hill respondents said that they were not aware of the policy and were not attending their school of choice (Unaware-NO respondents).

Although more respondents at Oak Hill (7%) than at Mayfield (3%) reported that they were actually attending the high school outside their catchment area (Transfer respondents), the evidence suggested that, on the average, less than 5% of all district respondents were attending a high school outside their catchment area while over 93% were attending within their catchment area (Within respondents).

All students were asked if they would like to attend the high school outside their catchment area. Only 2% of the Oak Hill respondents said, "Yes," whereas six times that many respondents at Mayfield (13%) said, "Yes." A probe for possible constraints that students felt concerning the exercise of choice revealed that 8% of the respondents at Mayfield and 1% of Oak Hill respondents felt that they could not

attend their school of choice because they had no transportation to the school, parental preference for a particular school, or they were unaware of the choice policy.

3) Consideration of specific factors during the decision process:

All respondents were asked to list the qualities that would guide their choice of school if, hypothetically, they had several schools from which to choose. Also, those students who had indicated that they were attending their school of choice were asked to list the most important reasons why they had chosen to attend their present school. The frequency of mention and rank order of the top six qualities *projected* by this group of adolescents to guide their choice of school are displayed in Table 1.

***Table* 1 If students had several high schools from which to choose, what qualities would guide their choice?**

Quality that would guide choice	Mayfield n=781			Oak Hill n=774		
	n	%	Rank	n	%	Rank
Kinds of students/people and the nature of their interactions with each other	327	41.9	(1)	325	42.0	(2)
Classes, programs, extracurricular activities offered	314	40.2	(3)	368	47.6	(1)
School climate or environment; not so stressful; less competitive; safe; drug-free	316	40.5	(2)	284	36.7	(4)
Teachers and teaching methods	262	33.5	(5)	317	41.0	(3)
Academics--getting the best possible education	287	36.7	(4)	229	29.6	(5)
Reputation of the school and location	91	11.6	(6)	104	13.4	(6)

Table 2 shows the rank order of the top six reasons for choice of school as reported by all YES respondents from both schools. Overall, friends were an important consideration in the choice of school for all YES students; about one-third of the YES respondents in the district cited friends as a reason why they chose a particular school. However, friends ranked first in importance and were mentioned by far more of the YES respondents at Mayfield than at Oak Hill. Although friends ranked a close second in importance and were a definite consideration for Oak Hill students, of slightly more importance were the kinds of students that go to the school and the nature of their interactions with each other (31.5%). Whereas 12.4% of Mayfield's YES respondents chose to attend their current school because of the kinds of students and people and how they treat you, that particular reason ranked as the most important on the list of why Oak Hill YES respondents chose to attend their school. "Students are accepting, reach out, and respect each other--it's how people act toward each other," reported Oak Hill respondents. "They are friendly, kind, fun; they are serious students; the kinds of kids that go here are more like me; they are

down-to-earth; I like the people overall--they're well-rounded; I heard that Oak Hill students are kinder to people from another country; the students and staff here work well together."

Academics, or the outcomes of education, ranked second in importance for all of Mayfield's YES respondents (38.6%) and fourth for Oak Hill's (25.5%)--a district average of 31.2%. Students at both schools felt that their respective schools were "good academically," that they were able to get "the best possible education." Respondents reported, "The academic standards are high; many students from this school go to college; the test scores are high; graduating from here looks good on college applications."

Table 2 **The six most important reasons why all YES respondents chose to attend their current high school**

Reason	Mayfield YES n=482			Oak Hill YES n=619		
	n	%	Rank	n	%	Rank
Friends	202	41.9	(1)	192	31.0	(2)
Kinds of students/people and and the nature of their interactions with each other	60	12.4		195	31.5	(1)
Academics--getting best possible education	186	38.6	(2)	158	25.5	(4)
Classes, programs, extracurricular activities	97	20.1	(4)	180	29.1	(3)
I was assigned; public school	126	26.1	(3)	127	20.5	
Teachers and teaching methods	65	13.5	(6)	131	21.2	(5)
School climate or environment; safe; drug-free	61	12.7		128	20.7	(6)
Proximity of school to home	92	19.1	(5)	123	19.9	
No Response/Don't Know	17	3.5		24	3.9	

A wide variety and plenty of academic classes from which to choose including AP courses and classes of various ability levels; challenging classes; the music and art programs; the sports/athletic programs; and the extracurricular activities were listed as reasons for school choice by one fourth of all YES respondents in the district: nearly one-third of the YES respondents at Oak Hill where it ranked third on their list, and one fifth of those at Mayfield where it ranked fourth.

For approximately one fourth of Mayfield YES respondents and one fifth of those at Oak Hill, the fact that they had been specifically assigned to the school, and it was a public school and free, was the reason why they 'chose' to attend the school. Over one fifth of all YES respondents in the district said, "I was assigned--had no choice; it was free, cheaper than private school; it's a public school--no money problems." A related, but separately mentioned, reason for choice--the location or proximity of the school to the respondent's home, was the reason reported by one fifth of all YES respondents in the district: 19.1% from Mayfield, ranking fifth in importance, and 19.9% from Oak Hill.

Analysis further revealed that 18% of the YES respondents district-wide, or 21.2% of Oak Hill's YES respondents and 13.5% of Mayfield's (ranking fifth and sixth in importance, respectively), reported that they chose their school because "the teachers are good; they are friendly, kind, caring, helpful, listen to you, respect you, and are supportive; the staff cares; the counselors are helpful."

Specific mention of the school's environment or atmosphere, or reference to the feel or tone of the school, was made by 19.4% of Oak Hill's YES respondents, ranking sixth in importance, and by 12.7% of Mayfield's YES respondents. "I feel more comfortable in this school; it's a more homey school; a relaxed learning environment--less competitive; not a lot of social pressure; not as cliquish; it's laid-back, not stressful; this is a school in which I felt I could do my best; I felt I had the opportunity to excel; there are good teacher-student relations here; a caring environment," reported Oak Hill respondents.

Among other factors reported to have contributed to all YES respondents' school choice were: the reputation of the school district and the school itself; a personal desire to attend the school; the concurrent or prior attendance of a sibling or other relative; the fact that transportation was provided or available; parental preference; the facilities and funds available; and, the variety of ethnic and social backgrounds that were represented among students attending the school.

In addition to exploring the reasons for school choice among the aggregate of YES respondents, reasons for choice were examined among YES-Transfers. Table 3 displays the six most important reasons

***Table* 3 Six most important reasons why YES-Transfers chose to attend their current high school**

Reason	Mayfield YES-Transfers n=15		Oak Hill YES-Transfers n=51	
	%	Rank	%	Rank
Friends	46.7	(1--tie)	31.4	(3)
Kinds of students/people and the nature of their interactions with each other	33.3	(3)	49.0	(1)
Academics--getting best possible education	46.7	(1--tie)	17.6	
Classes, programs, extracurricular activities	13.3	(6--tie)	27.5	(4)
Teachers and teaching methods	26.7	(4)	19.6	(6)
School climate or environment; safe; drug-free	6.6		45.1	(2)
The belief that Mayfield is better academically	20.0	(5)	–	
The belief that Oak Hill is better than Mayfield	–		23.5	(5)
Personal desire to attend this school	13.3	(6--tie)	11.8	
Reputation of district/school; recommendation	13.3	(6--tie)	13.7	
No Response/Don't Know	–		3.9	

why these students chose to attend their current school: the school climate; the kinds of students and their interactions with each other; academics; friends; classes, programs, and extracurricular activities; the perception that one school was better than the other; the teachers and teaching methodologies; a personal desire; and the district or school's reputation.

After first providing brief descriptions of the respective high school environments and students, respondents indicated on numerical response scales the emphasis given to various factors during the decision process and to the extent of influence particular individuals had in the process of deciding which school to attend. For the district as a whole, respondents' perceptions indicated the existence of contrasting school environments and kinds of students or student behaviors at the two district high schools. Mayfield's school environment, students, and student values were described in more negative terms, not only by Mayfield respondents themselves but by Oak Hill respondents, as well. In contrast, respondents from both schools described Oak Hill's school environment, students, and student values in more positive terms (see Appendix). Whereas 44% of Mayfield respondents viewed their school's environment negatively, only 32% viewed it positively. While over 71% of Oak Hill respondents viewed their school's environment positively, only 5% viewed it negatively. Similarly, while Mayfield respondents viewed fellow students more negatively (37%) than positively (22%), Oak Hill respondents viewed fellow students more positively (33%) than negatively (8%). The values of Mayfield students were perceived negatively by both Mayfield and Oak Hill respondents (Mayfield=11%; Oak Hill=11%) whereas positive student values were perceived among the Oak Hill students (1.7%; 4.5%).

When asked to indicate on seven-point numerical response scales (0=none at all; 6=great emphasis/ extent) the emphasis that YES respondents had given to the kind of environment and kinds of students they perceived to be at each of the high schools when choosing which school to attend, significant differences were found between the two school groups. Consideration of the emphasis placed by YES respondents on the kinds of students revealed a significant difference (p=.0007) between the Mayfield and Oak Hill YES groups. Whereas Oak Hill YES respondents indicated that they had put a great emphasis on the kinds of students they perceived to be at each of the two schools (mean=4.0), Mayfield YES respondents indicated that the emphasis they had put on the same factor was not as great (3.6). A significant difference (p=.0002) was likewise found between the two school groups concerning the emphasis placed by YES respondents on the perceived kind of environment. Oak Hill YES respondents indicated that they had put a great emphasis on the kind of environment (mean=4.2) while Mayfield YES respondents indicated that the emphasis put on the same factor was not as great (3.8).

Likewise, when asked to indicate on a seven-point numerical response scale the emphasis that respondents and their families had given to the academic reputation of each of the high schools when they were in the process of choosing which school to attend, a significant difference (p=.0001) was found between the two school groups. The academic reputation of a school was given greater emphasis by Mayfield YES respondents (mean=4.5) than by YES respondents from Oak Hill (mean=4.1). When

students were asked to indicate on a seven-point numerical response scale the extent to which their desire to be with friends had influenced their decision to request one high school over any other, the results revealed that, although the wish to be with friends had influenced Mayfield respondents to a greater extent than Oak Hill respondents, the difference between the two YES groups was slight and only significant at the .06 level (Mayfield mean=3.7; Oak Hill mean=3.5).

There was a significant difference (p=.0002) between these two school groups of YES respondents concerning the extent to which they felt their parents' desire for them to attend a particular high school had influenced the decision process. Although only 46% of Mayfield's YES respondents and 49% of those from Oak Hill said that they and their families had discussed which high school the respondent would attend, the extent to which parental desires for one school over another had influenced the decision was less for Oak Hill's YES respondents (mean=3.2) as compared to Mayfield's (mean=3.7).

How is the process of choice enacted by students and their families?

Few respondents reported the collection of information about the schools before deciding which school to attend. Only 17% of all Mayfield YES respondents and 23% of all of those from Oak Hill reported the collection of information. The schools were the primary source of information, including students' middle schools, presentations at the schools, school open houses, the high school office, and phone calls to the schools (Mayfield=5%; Oak Hill=8%). Word of mouth (5%; 6%) was also a source of information as were conversations with counselors (2%; 2%); the respondent's or a family member's prior experience at one or both of the high schools, or the opinion of a family member (0.4%; 2%); and, a personal visit to the school (0.2%; 2%). Still other sources of information were: information gathered from local school districts, private schools, and governmental agencies; conversations with students in attendance at the respective schools; Realtors; and, newspaper articles, magazines, pamphlets, the library.

Students were also asked what information or facts helped them to make the decision to choose their current school of attendance. The fact that the school was in their catchment area was cited by 19% of Mayfield YES respondents, ranking first in frequency of mention, and by 12% of Oak Hill's YES respondents, tying second in frequency of mention with the school's reputation (ranking third for Mayfield YES respondents--11%): "the good recommendations I got to go here; I heard better things about it from students who had attended both schools; it's one of the best schools in the country; Realtors; word of mouth." Oak Hill YES respondents (13%) attached primary importance to the general belief that they could get a good education at their school of choice; this ranked second in frequency of mention for Mayfield YES respondents (14%).

The fact that friends planned to attend or already attended the school of choice ranked fourth in frequency of mention for Mayfield YES respondents (9%) and fifth for Oak Hill's (9%). The school environment ranked sixth in frequency of mention for Oak Hill YES respondents (8%) while no particular information or facts ranked fifth for Mayfield's (8%) and the proximity of the school to the respondent's

home ranked sixth (6%). Other facts or information that contributed to respondents' decisions to choose their current school of attendance were: a personal desire to attend; parental preference; a family member's current or past experience at the schools; the kinds of students who attended the school; and, the teachers.

Family discussions concerning school of attendance were reported by less than half of all YES respondents: Mayfield=46%; Oak Hill=49%. However, nearly 65% of Mayfield's YES respondents and over 57% of Oak Hill's thought that their parents had a preference in high schools for them. The frequencies of mention of reported parental preferences and the attached importance (rank ordered) that emerged are displayed in Table 4. The two factors most frequently reported by YES respondents were their parents' desire for the best possible education for the respondent and the family's comfort with the school. Also of importance were: the good reputation of the school--the word of mouth from other parents; the proximity of the school; a sibling's prior experience; and, for Oak Hill YES respondents, the school's environment. Some Mayfield YES respondents reported that their parents had wanted a private school education for them.

Analysis revealed that decisions about which high school to attend had been made by most Mayfield YES respondents (22%) during the summer, followed in frequency of mention by "during the

***Table* 4 Reported reasoning for parental preferences in high school for YES respondents**

Reported reason	Mayfield YES n=482			Oak Hill YES n=619		
	n	%	Rank	n	%	Rank
Academics--getting the best possible education; wanted respondent to get into college of choice	133	27.6	(1)	79	12.8	(2)
Family comfort with the school--student's personal comfort with or desire to attend the school; parents' comfort with the school	52	10.8	(2)	82	13.2	(1)
The school environment--friendly, warm atmosphere; where respondent would be the happiest	11	2.3		57	9.2	(3)
Reputation of the school--the word of mouth from other parents	44	9.1	(3)	42	6.8	(4)
Sibling or parent attends/attended, or the personal experience of a sibling	21	4.4	(5)	40	6.5	(5)
Proximity of school	30	6.2	(4)	37	6.0	(6)
Wanted a private school education for respondent	17	3.5	(6)	22	3.6	
NR/DK	184	38.2		279	45.1	

eighth grade" (21%). Most YES respondents from Oak Hill (33%) indicated that they had made the decision during eighth grade, followed in frequency of mention by during the summer (18%). The majority of YES respondents from both schools indicated that they had made the decision right away Mayfield=44%; Oak Hill=50%). Although 16% of the Mayfield respondents reported that they did not get to decide, only 8% of the Oak Hill respondents indicated likewise. While almost 9% of the Oak Hill respondents indicated that they had taken anywhere from one to five months to make the decision, 7% of the Mayfield respondents indicated the same.

Does the operation of school choice significantly influence the racial and religious identity of the individual school communities?

To determine whether students' operation of school choice significantly influenced the racial and religious identity of the individual school communities in this district or provided an opportunity for inadvertent self-segregation, it was necessary first to determine the religious and racial identification of each school community. Once that was determined, the analysis continued with the examination of the patterns of movement of respondents who had exercised choice by transferring to the high school outside their catchment area (the Transfers) and an assessment of the significance of transfer moves into and out of the individual school communities. To complete the examination of the relation between choice and the racial heritage and religious affiliation of respondents, the YES and NO cohorts within each school community were examined to determine if choice as evidenced by respondents' self-reports of attendance at their first choice of public high school in the district was in any way related to racial heritage or religious affiliation.

Analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant relation between high school and the racial background of the aggregated survey respondents (response rate=96%; $p < .01$). Although white respondents were in the majority at both schools and almost equally distributed between the two schools (Mayfield=50.2%; Oak Hill=49.8%), there were more Asian respondents at Mayfield (54.4%) than at Oak Hill (45.6%), two and a half times more black respondents at Oak Hill (71.7%) than at Mayfield (28.3%), and over twice as many Hispanic respondents at Oak Hill (68%) when compared to Mayfield (32%).

Similar analysis of data collected from all respondents at both schools revealed that there was a statistically significant relation between high school and the religious affiliation of the aggregated survey respondents (response rate=97%; $p < .01$). There were twice as many Catholic respondents who attended Oak Hill (67.5%) as those who attended Mayfield (32.5%), and almost ten times as many Jewish respondents at Mayfield (90.6%) compared to Oak Hill (9.4%). Far more Protestants attended Oak Hill (61%) than attended Mayfield (39%) and nearly three times as many Muslims attended Mayfield (74.3%) compared to those who were in attendance at Oak Hill (25.7%). More respondents of 'other' faiths attended Oak Hill (62.5%) than attended Mayfield (37.8%) as did respondents who said that they had no

religious affiliation (Mayfield=43.5%; Oak Hill=56.5%). Hindu respondents were almost equally represented at both schools (53.7%; 46.3%).

To determine if the operation of school choice, as evidenced by the action of transferring, had significantly influenced the racial and religious identities of the individual school communities, Transfer respondents were analyzed in relation to the other respondents in the respective school communities. This analysis revealed no statistically significant relation between racial heritage or religious affiliation and the exercise of choice. That is, the racial heritage of the respective groups of Transfers was not significantly different from that of the other respondents in each of the high school communities *into which the Transfers entered*, nor was the religious affiliation of the respective groups of Transfers significantly different from that of the other respondents in each of the high school communities *into which the Transfers entered.*

However, analysis of the Transfers in relation to the individual school communities *from which they exited*, revealed statistically significant differences concerning religious affiliation ($p<.01$ for both schools) but not concerning racial heritage. Inspection of the data indicated that *more* Muslim respondents and *more* Jewish respondents than might be expected chose to transfer from the Oak Hill catchment area to attend Mayfield. In contrast, far *fewer* Jewish respondents and far *more* Catholic respondents than expected chose to transfer from the Mayfield catchment area to attend school at Oak Hill.

Although there were no statistically significant differences concerning racial heritage of the two Transfer groups in relation to the individual school communities from which they exited, that does not mean that there were no noticeable patterns of movement of specific racial groups across the attendance boundaries. Although no black respondents reported transferring from the Oak Hill catchment area to attend Mayfield, almost 19% of all black respondents who reported living in the Mayfield catchment area chose to attend Oak Hill; i.e., more blacks than expected chose to exit Mayfield to attend Oak Hill. While more Asian Transfers chose to attend Oak Hill (56%) than to attend Mayfield (44%), fewer than expected exited from the Mayfield catchment area.

Examination of the YES and NO respondents within the two individual high school communities--those respondents who had exercised choice as evidenced by their self-reports of attendance at their first choice of public high school in the district as opposed to those respondents who had said that they were not attending their school of choice in the district, revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups concerning racial heritage ($p <.01$ for both schools). That is, the racial heritage of the respondents within each high school's YES group was significantly different from the racial heritage of the respondents within each high school's NO group. At Mayfield two-thirds of the Asian respondents had indicated that Mayfield was their school of choice (66.4%); one-third said that it was not their school of choice (33.6%). Over three times as many black respondents indicated that Mayfield was not their school of choice (77%) as those who claimed that it was (23%); and the same was true for those respondents of American Indian and mixed heritage (75%; 25%). At Oak Hill a slightly different pattern was found; far

more Asian respondents than might be expected indicated that they were not attending their school of choice and more black respondents than might be expected likewise were not attending their school of choice; however, more respondents than might be expected of mixed and of American Indian heritage as well as those who were white indicated that they were attending their school of choice.

Further examination of the YES and NO respondents within the two individual school communities revealed no statistically significant relation between religious affiliation and choice at Mayfield. At Oak Hill, however, results indicated a statistically significant relation between religious affiliation and choice ($p < .01$), as evidenced by respondents' self-reports of attendance at their first choice of public high school in the district. The data from Oak Hill indicated that more Catholic respondents than expected had indicated that Oak Hill was their school of choice whereas more respondents than expected of 'other' religious affiliations and those having no religious affiliation had indicated that Oak Hill was not their school of choice.

What are the perceived outcomes for the individual students as a consequence of school choice?

Over 85% of all Oak Hill YES respondents felt that they had made the right decision; 10% were not sure and 1.5% indicated that they had not made the right decision. In contrast, about 68% of all YES respondents from Mayfield felt that they had made the right decision; almost 25% were not sure and 3% indicated that they had not made the right decision. Analysis revealed that YES-Transfer respondents were not necessarily pleased with their decision; not quite 47% of the Mayfield YES-Transfers felt that they had made the right decision. In contrast, over 88% of the Oak Hill YES-Transfers felt that they had made the right decision.

When asked why they felt the way they did about their decision, respondents cited several reasons according to whether their initial response had been positive, negative, or had indicated uncertainty. Although the aggregated YES respondents at both schools most frequently referred to their happiness at their school of choice and to their enjoyment, almost twice as many YES respondents at Oak Hill (51.7%) as at Mayfield (27.4%) indicated: "I love it here; it is the best school; it's my choice and I'm glad I did it; it fulfills my needs." In second place for frequency of mention by YES respondents from both schools (Mayfield=14.3%; Oak Hill=14.9%) was the positive educational experience of the total individual, followed in third place (7.5%; 11.6%) by the positive school environment and the people: "I feel comfortable here; the people are kind and willing to help you; I fit in here."

While having friends at their school ranked in fourth place for Oak Hill YES respondents (3.9%), ranking fourth in frequency of mention for Mayfield YES respondents (6.4%) was a state of confusion or discomfort. Respondents who had indicated uncertainty about their decision said that "the other school may have been better; I am sure there is a school I would like somewhere." Ranking fifth and sixth, respectively, in frequency of mention for Mayfield YES respondents were the negative environment and

people (4.8%), and a generic negative feeling (4.6%), expressed by those respondents who had indicated either dissatisfaction or uncertainty about their decision. Tying in fifth place for frequency of mention among Oak Hill YES respondents were the generic negative feeling (2.6%), and the fact that the school was in the respondent's catchment area (2.6%) thus indicating perhaps that the school was convenient, or that the respondent felt powerless to change the situation, or, acceptance of what existed.

To explore further the student-perceived outcomes of choice, all respondents were asked to rate their academic and social comfort levels, and their happiness and sense of well-being on six-point numerical response scales (1=extremely uncomfortable/unhappy; 6=extremely comfortable/happy). Within each school community YES respondents were compared with NO respondents. Also, the YES respondents from both school communities were compared. Statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) concerning all three factors were found between YES and NO respondents at both schools. NO respondents, on the average, indicated less comfort academically and socially when compared to YES respondents. Likewise, a general feeling of happiness and sense of well-being was reportedly less, on the average, for NO respondents as compared to YES respondents. Moreover, significant differences ($p < .05$) were found between the two school communities concerning all three factors when both groups of YES respondents were considered. Mayfield YES respondents, on the average, indicated less comfort academically and socially when compared to Oak Hill YES respondents (Mayfield means=4.4 and 4.3, respectively; Oak Hill means=4.5 and 4.6, respectively). Likewise, a general feeling of happiness and sense of well-being was reportedly less, on the average, for Mayfield YES respondents (mean=4.2) as compared to Oak Hill YES respondents (mean=4.4).

Discussion

The district in which this study was conducted is an established suburban residential community located near a large urban center. Considered by many to be a 'Lighthouse District', the district claims to attract the interest of educators in other parts of its home state and across the nation and recognition for its successful and innovative programs. The two high schools in the district have been nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for excellence in education. Offering a comprehensive program of study with an emphasis on college preparation, both schools are considered to have comparable curricular offerings and programs. The district objective is equity and excellence. Thus, theoretically, no matter which school students attend, they have equal access to the same opportunities for excellence in education and the same types of classes, programs, and extracurricular offerings.

But results of this study revealed that there are striking differences between the two schools, perhaps not among the class offerings and activities, nor among the academic achievements of the students in each school, but in other ways that can distinguish one school from the other and impact student behavior in and out of school. It is these differences, the researcher concludes, that contribute to students'

choice of school in this district, as evidenced by: the transfers to the high school outside a student's catchment area; the projected reasoning for criteria to guide school choice; the actual reasons for selection among many respondents; and student satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their choice of school whether by transfer or by family settlement in one catchment area or the other. More specifically, it is the sense of community, the school ethos--*the school's environment and people, including the nature of the interactions among students, faculty, and staff*, that distinguishes these two schools and provides the unintended 'diversity' in schooling arrangements for the district's high school students and, thus, the ultimate single most important selection criterion for choice of school in this district (see Raywid, 1985).

To recapitulate: the school environment at Mayfield was perceived by respondents from both schools as "high pressure with lots of stress to achieve better than your peers; very competitive; very intense; very uptight." Mayfield students were perceived by respondents from both schools as "unkind; self-centered; inconsiderate." In contrast, the environment and students at Oak Hill were viewed by respondents from both schools as "friendly; comfortable; caring; warm; [a school where there was] more stress on learning rather than simply achieving or getting a grade." Whereas teachers were viewed as "good, well-trained, knowledgeable" at Mayfield, they were described as "kind, helpful, caring, supportive" at Oak Hill. YES-Transfers into Oak Hill placed primary importance upon, and personally sought 'people' (faculty, staff, administrators) and students with whom they perceived similar values and interests and who were perceived to be sensitive and supportive, and, an environment in which they perceived there would be a personal fit. Triangulation led to validation of the findings concerning student reasons for choice of school among Oak Hill respondents. However, among Mayfield respondents, the findings presented a dichotomy. The factors of school environment and the kinds of students and the nature of their interactions with each other achieved little importance concerning actual choice of school among Mayfield respondents. However, when asked to project the qualities that would guide their choice of school, the factors that ranked first and second, respectively, in frequency of mention were the kinds of students and people at a school and the nature of their interactions with each other, and, the school's environment. Over 40% of Mayfield respondents identified these factors as important.

What contributed to the dichotomy as evidenced by Mayfield respondents' actual and projected reasons for choice? Why did respondents who exited Mayfield place such importance upon the kinds of people they perceived at Oak Hill and the nature of interactions among people? Certainly, the fact that adolescents are in the process of breaking away from their parents and developing an awareness of self and thus are trying to construct a personal system of values and moral conduct contributes to the desire to be with peers with whom they feel compatible, with whom they share similar values and morals (Coleman, 1961; Douvan & Adelson, 1966). The rejection of one school community for another may well be explained by the respondent-perceived differences in student values, attitudes, and behaviors toward fellow human beings. In their efforts to define their personal identity and find a balance in life, these

adolescents may have found less dissonance in the process of integrating family and peer values and norms into a functioning unity at the one school in contrast to the other.

But that does not explain the dichotomy in the findings regarding the Mayfield respondents' projected and actual choice of school, nor the observation that Mayfield respondents viewed their own school environment and fellow students more negatively than positively whereas the opposite was true at Oak Hill. A brief digression to examine results of an earlier study conducted in 1989-90 at Mayfield may contribute to an understanding of the dichotomy in the findings of the present study and provide support for the logic of the conclusion. The earlier study[4] revealed findings similar in nature to those of the present study. Student perceptions of Mayfield's climate were lowest on the *student-peer relationships* subscale, a measure that reflected students' perceptions concerning care and respect for each other and student cooperation. Measures of student satisfaction were lowest on the *fellow student* subscale, i.e., satisfaction with peer relations was lower than all other scores on eight measures of student satisfaction.

Commenting on the findings of the study, an external consultant found the satisfaction and climate scores to be "much too low and of considerable concern...[Mayfield] had the lowest score relating to peer relationships of all the schools I have studied...Peer to peer relationships among students may be a displacement of more fundamental frustrations with their relationship with adults...This school does not present a favorable interpersonal climate for student growth" (Report to District, 1990).

The findings from the 1989-90 study and the above quoted assessment of Mayfield's unfavorable inter-personal climate contribute toward an understanding of the dichotomy in the findings from the present study and lend support for the logic of the conclusion. The results of the 1989-90 study help to explain why the most frequently mentioned factors by Mayfield respondents, when asked to project the qualities that would guide their choice of school, were the kinds of people at a school and the nature of their interactions with each other, and, the school's environment. *The most important selection criteria projected by Mayfield respondents were those factors that contribute to the school ethos and to the school as a community.* Likewise, the 1989-90 study results help to explain why the factors of school environment and the kinds of students and the nature of their interactions with each other achieved so *little* importance concerning actual choice of school among respondents from Mayfield.

The early effective schools research focused on an input-output model of educational efficiency with effectiveness defined as overall student academic performance as measured by standardized achievement scores. However, more recent studies have examined other variables that contribute to school effectiveness. The results of that research are a redefinition of an effective school as a place with a sense of community, a place where there is an emphasis on the common humanity of its inhabitants--where an ethic of caring is conveyed through the interactions of students, faculty, and staff, a place where there is a strong attachment to a common ethos (Bryk, Lee, & Smith, 1990; see also: Lipsitz, 1984; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Talbert, 1988; for discussion of limitations of early effective schools research and limitations of input-output model of effectiveness, see Madaus, Airasian, & Kellaghan, 1980).

The concept of a school ethos or culture is inclusive of the style and quality of school life, the values and beliefs of the members of a school organization and the practices and activities that derive from those values (Bryk, Lee, & Smith, 1990). Among shared values in a school are norms for instruction and norms for civility. Norms for instruction affect the conduct of teachers' and students' school work and norms for civility affect the interpersonal relations within the school organization. Norms for civility, Bryk et al. insist, "involve the routine expression of feelings about the welfare of others as part of the round of daily life" (p. 166) and can have positive effects on individuals' academic efforts and psychological well-being.

The way in which an adolescent perceives and interprets others' thoughts and feelings, and the importance of doing so, is influenced directly by what social behaviors and abilities are valued and rewarded in the environments in which adolescents are grouped and friends are made (Epstein, 1983b). Thus, the school community can help provide the opportunity for and shape the norms for civility and the nature of interactions among adolescents. If a school encourages participation in common activities but also emphasizes individual competition, there will be little cooperative behavior or supportive personal relations in the organization. Cut-throat competition does not encourage cooperation or the sense of a caring school community.[5]

The school ethos can influence person perception and other perspective-taking through the organization of school and classroom activities, curricular and extracurricular programs, and the distribution of students from identifiable subgroups. School and classroom social organization can affect student contacts and contribute to the development of acceptance, tolerance, leadership, and friendship among students who might not otherwise seek each other. The school environment can affect peer relations and friendships by whether cooperative behavior or competitive behavior is encouraged, in the way that academic tasks are structured and how grades are distributed, and in the way that students are encouraged to work, i.e., in mixed gender, racial, religious, and ethnic or cross-ability groupings (for discussion of these ideas, see: Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer & Wisenbaker, 1979; Bryk, Lee & Smith, 1990; Epstein, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c; Karweit, 1983; Karweit & Hansell, 1983; Slavin & Hansell, 1983). A productive school ethos determines whether a school is an effective place to learn and can successfully promote desired skills such as interpersonal relations. It may also determine the quality of life for members of the school community--students, faculty, and staff (Purkey & Smith, 1983).

Mayfield and Oak Hill are both 'effective' schools. That is, the relationship between the input factors and the output of each school, as measured by scores on norm referenced tests, label the two schools as 'academically effective'. As the results of the present study revealed, adolescents whose choice of school is guided by a desire for academic excellence are also insistent that their choice of school would be based upon the perceived school ethos and the feeling of the school as a community--upon the school's environment and people, including the nature of the interactions among students, faculty, and staff.

The free market orientation of school choice requires that schools attract their student enrollment through the quality of education delivered and the options and diversity in schooling arrangements. As education consumers desirous of positive outcomes, students and their families have the right to determine the criteria and choose the school that they perceive would maximize the student-environment fit to enable academic success, social comfort, and a sense of well-being. The findings from the present study revealed that, although deliberate diversification of schooling arrangements may not have been the district's objective, there *was* diversity. The criteria that guided choice of school not only included friends, a desire for academic excellence, the classes and extracurricular activities offered, and the teachers and their teaching methodologies, but those qualities that lend themselves to a productive school ethos, those qualities that can determine the quality of life for members of the school community, those qualities that provide for a person-environment fit. Predicting the importance of a school's environment as a criterion for school choice, Raywid (1985) had suggested that "choice of school climate...may ultimately be the single most important selection criterion for both students and their parents" (p.446). In this district, the climate of a school or the student-environment fit was a critical determinant of school choice.

Does person-environment fit include an adolescent's religious affiliation or racial heritage? The findings from this study indicate that criteria such as race and religion do, for some adolescents and their families, contribute to the choice decision. Many Americans, contends Brandl (1989), "are concerned that community is a euphemism for resegregation by race, social class, academic potential, or religion, and an excuse for subsequent inculcation of bigotry" (p. 63-4). To limit the potential adverse effects of school choice, carefully constructed policies of choice must be designed, policies that facilitate academic excellence, policies that facilitate community and student-environment fit.

Conclusion

The topic of school choice will undoubtedly continue to receive attention in education reform literature, state legislatures, school board rooms, and in the media. It has gained unprecedented support from parents, the general public, the business community, and politicians as a means by which families can become involved in the education of their children. Although little is known about how families decide which school their children will attend, and how the interests, needs, and objectives of adolescents intersect with a policy of school choice, this study has contributed toward an understanding of why and how secondary school students and their families choose one school over another.

The present study was an investigative case study and thus limits the generalizations that can be made to other school districts or choice plans. However, there are commonalities that exist among adolescents--their interests and needs, their desires and hopes, that should serve to inform educators about the qualities that would guide adolescents' choice of school, the strategies or process they use as they and

their families go about making a decision concerning which school to attend, and the outcomes--individually and collectively, that can result from students' exercise of school choice.

To contribute further to an understanding of the operation of school choice and how the particular needs of adolescents can be addressed through choice, additional studies that examine how and why adolescents choose one school over another could contribute to the evidence about the process and outcomes of school choice as it relates to secondary school students and their families. Is the primacy of student-environment fit evidenced in the findings of other studies? Are other students concerned about academic excellence? Are friends a primary reason for choice? How does perceived instructional organization and methodology influence choice? What methods do students and their families use to aid the decision process?

There have been concerns that policies of school choice (in particular, magnet schools in large urban areas) may create the possibility for a "new form of segregation based on a combination of race, income level, and previous success in school" (Moore and Davenport, 1990, p. 216). Although the schools in the present study were not magnet schools, nor located in a large urban area, an important research question that the study addressed concerned the operation of choice as it influences the racial and religious identity of a school community. A significant finding of the study was that students who exercised choice, as evidenced by transfer, exited school communities whose religious identities were significantly different than those of the respective transfer groups and entered school communities whose religious identities were not significantly different. Continued study, especially longitudinal studies, of the outcomes as they concern the operation of choice and potential influence on the racial and religious identities of school communities could contribute to a better understanding of the overall process and outcomes of choice.

Notes

[1]Choice, argues Levin (1990), is a basic tenet of a democratic society and a market economy. "The lack of choice is usually associated with centrally administered and authoritarian regimes" (p.248). Thus, choice in itself is a crucial indicator of a free people. This fact alone contributes to the intensity of feelings regarding family choice of school and to the prediction that 'choice' will remain a prominent part of the policy scene regarding education.

[2]Envisioning the schools of tomorrow, Coleman (1990) argues that the day of the 'common school' is waning--schools as they are currently constituted are becoming less viable institutions. He predicts that, "The period of 'the school', a single monolithic institutional structure within which children spend their preschool and elementary years, and within which young people build an adolescent society, may be a period that is passing" (p. xxi). Suggesting that educators and policy makers should be thinking about what way education can be organized for young people that "will best allow their evolution toward optimal forms," Coleman supports the idea of providing some form of resources to parents so that they are free to go out in the market place and choose that optimal educational experience for their child. He does not detail the precise way in which the resources should be provided, but urges careful thought to the method to be used. Ultimately, he argues, "the proper design of such a resource distribution is far more likely to lead to good environments for children and youth than is the direct attempt at institutional design on the part of educators, social scientists, politicians, or some mix of these, followed by the assignment of children to these environments on the basis of administrative convenience" (pp. xxi-xxii).

[3]School names are pseudonyms.

[4]Upon discretion of this researcher and to maintain anonymity of the school district in which both the present and 1989-90 studies were conducted, the title of the instrument that was used to assess the school environment of Mayfield in the 1989-90 study is deliberately not identified.

[5]In their discussion of school cultural systems and the inadequacy of the goal model as a framework for examination of effective schools, Bryk, Lee and Smith (1990) cite an example of the inconsistency that often exists between organizational goals and the actual content of organizational beliefs. Although medical students in the Becker, Geer and Hughes (1961) study were sharing many "common activities," they were influenced by their school's institutional norms of cut-throat competitiveness. As a result, cooperative behavior was discouraged, supportive relations among students did not develop nor did a sense of community.

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Appendix

Respondents' perceptions of the school environment and the students at both Mayfield and Oak Hill

Category of response	Mayfield (n=781) respondents' perceptions of:		Oak Hill (n=774) respondents' perceptions of:	
	Mayfield	Oak Hill	Mayfield	Oak Hill
Positive students	22.3%	4.5%	1.8%	33.2%
Negative students	37.4%	1.0%	22.2%	8.0%
Positive school environment	32.1%	20.4%	3.0%	71.1%
Negative school environment	43.9%	4.1%	15.6%	4.8%
Positive teachers	9.9%	0.5%	0.5%	19.6%
Negative teachers	4.6%	0.4%	0.5%	2.1%
Positive administration	--	--	--	0.6%
Negative administration	0.4%	--	0.3%	1.4%
Positive academics	18.4%	0.5%	1.9%	15.5%
Negative academics	1.7%	4.9%	0.3%	1.7%
Fewer problems with drugs	0.4%	11.4%	1.2%	5.3%
Problems with drugs	4.0%	11.4%	1.2%	5.3%
Positive classes, programs, extra-curricular activities offered	3.1%	2.4%	0.6%	6.3%
Negative classes, programs, extra-curricular activities offered	4.6%	--	1.0%	1.3%
Different types of people	3.6%	2.0%	0.8%	7.5%
Lack of different types of people	0.1%	0.3%	0.5%	0.1%
Positive student values	--	1.7%	--	4.5%
Negative student values	11.3%	0.4%	10.9%	2.8%
Religious and ethnicity issues	2.3%	0.1%	3.5%	0.3%
Policy issues	2.0%	0.1%	--	1.6%
Don't know	3.6%	43.9%	44.7%	3.9%
No response	4.7%	23.0%	20.7%	3.6%